
CAUSES OF DEATH IN CHILDREN AND YOUTH

In 1999 the King County Medical Examiner's Office investigated 113 deaths of persons 19 years old or younger, which represented 8% (113/1468) of the deaths investigated. Of these deaths, 19% (22/113) were of natural manner, 25% (28/113) were accidents, 14% (16/113) were homicides, 25% (28/113) were traffic related, and 14% (16/113) were suicides. There were 3 deaths of children/youths classified as undetermined manner where the investigation was inconclusive as to whether the death was accidental or with intent.

Of the 22 natural deaths of children and youth investigated by the Medical Examiner, 73% (16/22) were of infants less than one year of age. Of these 22 infants who died of natural causes, 12 were due to Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS).

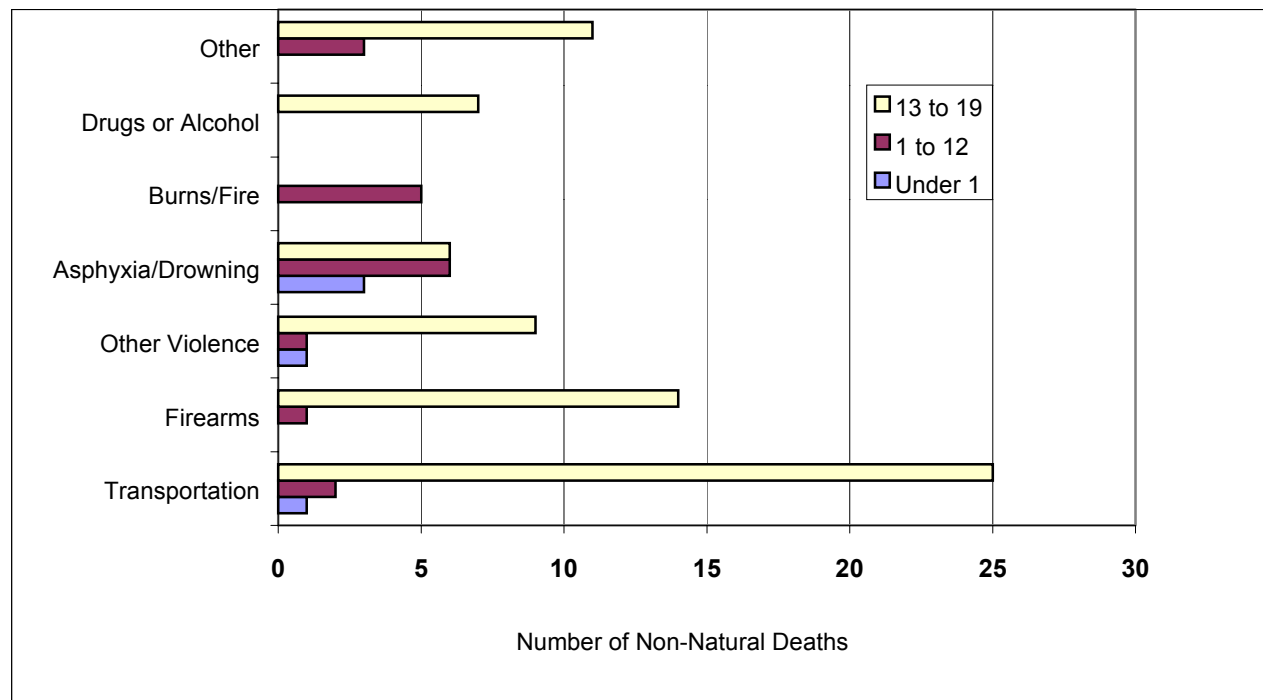
There were 28 children and youth whose deaths were classified as accidental, excluding traffic-related accidents. Of these 28 accidental deaths, the leading circumstance was related to drowning (8). Another 28 children and youth died in traffic related accidents.

There were 16 homicides among children and youth. Of these 16 homicide victims, 12 were teenagers, 13 through 19 years of age, and 4 were children 12 and under. Fifty percent (8/16) of the children and youth homicide victims died by firearms. Two (2) children 1 year of age or less were the victims of suspected child abuse.

There were 16 youth suicides, between the ages of 16 and 19 years. Males comprised 69% (11/16) of the victims. Regarding the methods used to commit suicide by youth, seven (7) were firearms, five (5) by use of drugs, two (2) by hanging and two (2) by jumping from heights.

Twenty-eight (28) children and youth 19 years and under died in traffic-related accidents, of whom 25 (89%) were teenagers. There were 8 motor vehicle drivers and 15 motor vehicle passengers. Two (2) were bicyclists and two (2) were pedestrians. There was one (1) motorcycle driver. Of the 25 youths who died in the motor vehicles, 60% (15/25) were known to be unrestrained and 40% (10/25) were unknown if they were using seatbelts. Both bicyclists did not use helmets. Both pedestrians were teenagers.

The following tables list the causes of death among children and youth for all manners in three age groups: under 1 year, 1-12 years and 13-19 years.

Graph 11-1 Non-Natural Causes of Death in Children and Youth²**Table 11-1 Causes of Death: Children Under 1 Year**

CIRCUMSTANCES	MANNER OF DEATH						SUB TOTAL	TOTAL
	A	H	S	T	U	N		
Miscellaneous	3	1	0	1	0	0		5
<i>Asphyxia</i>	2	0	0	0	0	0	2	
<i>Automobile Passenger</i>	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	
<i>Aspiration</i>	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	
<i>Blunt Impact</i>	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	
Natural disease	0	0	0	0	0	16 ³		16
Total	3	1	0	1	0	16		21

² Natural deaths excluded.³ 12 of the 16 Natural Deaths were determined Sudden Infant Death Syndrome.

Table 11-2 Causes of Death: Children 1 to 12 Years

CIRCUMSTANCES	MANNER OF DEATH						SUB TOTAL	TOTAL
	A	H	S	T	U	N		
Transportation related	0	0	0	2	0	0		2
<i>Motor vehicle passenger</i>	0	0	0	2	0	0	2	
<i>Pedestrian</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Other Violence	0	3	0	0	1	0		4
<i>Fire/Burns</i>	0	1	0	0	1	0	2	
<i>Gunshot wound</i>	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	
<i>Blunt Impact</i>	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	
Asphyxia	5	0	0	0	1	0		6
<i>Positional</i>	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	
<i>Drowning</i>	4	0	0	0	1	0	5	
Miscellaneous	6	0	0	0	0	0		6
<i>Fall, Ground Level</i>	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	
<i>Fire/Explosion</i>	3	0	0	0	0	0	3	
<i>Non Traffic -Vehicle</i>	2	0	0	0	0	0	2	
Natural disease	0	0	0	0	0	2		2
Total	11	3	0	2	2	2		20

Table 11-3 Causes of Death: Children 13 to 19 Years

CIRCUMSTANCES	MANNER OF DEATH						SUB TOTAL	TOTAL
	A	H	S	T	U	N		
Transportation related	0	0	0	25	0	0		25
<i>Motor vehicle driver</i>	0	0	0	8	0	0	8	
<i>Motor vehicle passenger</i>	0	0	0	12	0	0	12	
<i>Motorcycle driver</i>	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	
<i>Motorcycle passenger</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
<i>Pedestrian</i>	0	0	0	2	0	0	2	
<i>Bicycle</i>	0	0	0	2	0	0	2	
Physical Trauma	4	11	7	0	1	0		23
<i>Blunt trauma</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
<i>Gunshot wound</i>	0	10	5	0	0	0	14	
<i>Stabbing</i>	0	4	0	0	0	0	4	
<i>Struck by object</i>	4	0	0	0	1	0	5	
Drugs or alcohol exposure	2	0	5	0	0	0		7
Asphyxia	4	0	2	0	0	0		6
<i>Hanging</i>	0	0	2	0	0	0	2	
<i>Drowning</i>	4	0	0	0	0	0	4	
Miscellaneous	4	0	2	0	0	0		6
<i>Fall From Height</i>	2	0	0	0	0	0	2	
<i>Fall, Ground Level</i>	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	
<i>Jumping</i>	0	0	2	0	0	0	2	
<i>Hyperthermia</i>	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	
Natural disease	0	0	0	0	0	4		4
Total	14	11	16	25	1	4		71